

Miraculous: Couture & L'Amour

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Summary: Spring is here! Its a new take on life for Marinette following the events of "Volpina". New ideas, new inspiration... a new rival in the form of Elias Argent! (A/N: this is a really bad summary but hey, the story is good! Probably revise this later)

1. Chapter 1

AK: Hey, I am back with another story. This one is for Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & C/hat Noir (depends on where you watch it). I am a huge fan of this show, but I have been holding myself back because of plot holes in my story. AND now I have a story with minimal plot holes and a plausible story, so here it is.

Chapter 1: Spring Fever Rivals

It was Spring in Paris, and everything was in bloom. Not because nature intended it that way- no, no, this is Paris. It was because of the akuma, the Fleur.

The Fleur wore bright floral colors, his costume mainly a vibrant green bodysuit, decorated with flower icons of different color and climbing ivy patterns. On his wrist were two flower bulbs, the left a bright orange and the left a searing violet. From the neck of his suit came two yellow sloping petals, like wings.

Flittering around Paris, spreading sparkles from the bulbs on his wrist, which rapidly grew the plants it touched to full maturity and most of the time to massive proportions. He whizzed over parks and flower stands, mutating the flowers and trees to rainforest proportions. Hot on his trail, however, were Ladybug and Chat Noir. The red and black superduo were swinging through the enchanted forest after the akuma-tized organic decorator. Having been commissioned by Chloe Bourgeois to decorate her Spring Party, and then promptly abused emotionally, the decorator had Ladybug's sympathies but she couldn't let his get to Chloe, who was enroute to school in a white

limo.

Finally, the Fleur stopped atop a tree, ready to take aim at the crack of dandelions in the street which Chloe's limo was fast approaching. "I'll show you a passe party, mademoiselle Bourgeois!"

"Chat, time for some fancy scratching!" Ladybug called to her partner, flipping to the top of an oversized cherry blossom tree. Man the things people import, Ladybug grimaced mentally, dusting a slew of petals from her suit.

"You got it, M'Lady!" her blonde partner replied. "***CAT-ACLYSM!***" Raking his now destructive claws across the treetop, he successfully unbalanced the akuma. But not before he successfully hit the dandelions.

A trio of puffy white clouds burst onto the road and the limo driver stomped on the breaks hard to avoid it. Unfortunately, he did not. He crashed right into it.

Ladybug swung over to the scene, at the driver's door in seconds. "Are you alright?" She asked.

Before the dazed driver could reply, Chloe shrieked from the back, "LADYBUG, OMG I'm so glad you're here! No! Now I'll be late!"

Ladybug frowned. They had more than half an hour before school started. The school was literally a block away. Even if she walked, and that was a big if considering it was Chloe, she would make it.

Chat landed next to her. "Well, I'd say that this were a dandy fine mess we have here, but then I'd be lion."

Ladybug groaned. "Chatâ€¦ punsâ€¦?" Especially bad ones like thatâ€¦

Her black-leather-clad partner grinned rakishly, "You know you love them."

"I'd love for you to- DUCK!"

Narrowly they missed a stream of sparkles which hit a nearby tree, mutating it to a seven story tall behemoth. "_Mon dieu!_" exclaimed Chloe as her car began to shake as the roots grew into the street. It upended her car and luckily, both occupants were out before it front flipped.

Once again, Chloe latched onto Ladybug's arm and screamed. "Stop that!" Ladybug hissed at the blond blowhorn.

"M'Lady, me thinks we must wrap this up soon. I'm running out of time." Chat nervously confessed.

"You keep him busy. I'll see what Lady Luck has for us today." At her pronouncement, Chat saluted and engaged the Fleur with quick swipes and bad puns.

Ladybug shrugged off Chloe and shoved her towards the driver. "Take her and get clear. Let's get this over with. LUCKY CHARM!"

A Ladybug patterned folded tarp fell into her hands. "What?" She scoped the scene, noting a lamp post behind the Fleur, a fake potted plant, and Chat. "Chat! Grab the plant and toss it here!"

She unfurled the tarp to arms length apart.

Chat swiped it up and lobbed it into her makeshift canopy, and she launched it in the air in a high arc.

The Fleur, predictably, started spraying sparkles at his in a steady stream, confused when it didn't mutate. Ladybug was there with the tarp, completely unfurled, ready to wrap him up against the lamp pole. Once his hands were securely covered in the poly-plastic lining, Ladybug went for the akuma, which was on his chest, the only faded flower of the bunch on his suit. She crushed it underfoot, releasing the akuma.

"You've been a very naughty akuma." Ladybug said, snatching the blackened butterfly from the air. "It's time for some Spring Cleaning!" She pressed the face of her yo-yo, releasing a pure white butterfly. "Bye-bye, petit papillon."

As the man slowly transformed back to his former state, Lady bug rolled up the tarp. "Miraculous LADYBUG!" She threw it high in the air, releasing a swarm of ladybugs to return the city to normal. Personally, she wanted to leave Chloe's party looking a complete jungle mess, and her limo totaled, but it all reverted too.

"Bien joue!" The two heros bumped fists. Chat's ring beeped again. "And now, I must bid you adieu, my lady."

The black cat used his baton to get away, vaulting over the buildings to secrecy.

Ladybug only had a few minutes now too. The mousy brunette man who took the place of the Fleur stared up at her. She crouched to his level. "I think your work is tres bien, and so does your assistant. Don't let someone put you down for having a unique approach to decorating."

The dazed and mute man nodded timidly. "Merci beaucoup, Ladybug!" the voice of the assistant came from behind them.

The frazzled girl ran up to the man, resting concerned and comforting hands on his deflated shoulders. "T-thank you! Ladybug!"

"Don't mention it." Ladybug smiled. Her earring gave her another warning. "Adieu!"

She yo-yoed her way to privacy on the street of her school, in the deserted secrecy of some darkened alley way. The transformation gave way in a flash of red light, revealing Marinette Dupain-Cheng, alter ego of Ladybug, heroine of Paris.

She smiled to her kwami who landed in her cupped hands. "We made great on time, today."

"And Alya wasn't on the scene," the kwami- Tikki- giggled.

"That was weird, but I guess even a star reporter and blogger extraordinaire has an off day or two." Mari carefully lowered her kwami into her bag at her hip.

She made her way to the front of the school to wait for Alya to arrive, and made note that Chloe was standing at the front with Sabrina, eyes glued to the street.

"Hey, girl!" Alya exclaimed kidding around the corner.

"Alya, good morning. I beat you to school." Mari smugly stated.

Alya groaned. "I know; and there was an akuma attack today. I miss that too. Tell me you were there!"

"Hahaâ€¦ If I were there, would I really be here? Ahead of you?" Mari hedged. Technically not lying.

Alya groaned again. "I saw the news coverage. Chloe was of course the cause." She shot the blond culprit a dirty look and then proceeded to talk about how she'd overslept, because she was up all night fielding through new theories on Ladybug and Chat Noir's origins.

"...And some guy from Quebec claims he created them in some top secret lab. Another guy, Zag or something, said he made them as a cartoon for teenagers. Can you believe it?"

Mari agreed with her best friend. It was easier that way.

Suddenly, a long, sleek limo pulled up to the curb and Chloe squealed.

Mari frowned. Chloe only ever squealed over Adrien. But Adrien had a photo shoot from morning to noon today. And it was totally legitimate how Mari knew it this time: she had overheard Adrien telling Nino after class yesterday about how he had a last minute addition to his schedule for _Sirius Styles _magazine. Granted they were in front of the school and Mari had been hiding in the bushes, but she didn't stalk him to get the informationâ€¦.

From the back of the limo came some tall blond boy who was definitely not Adrien. Okay, so maybe he wasn't traditionally blondâ€¦

He was pretty in that standard pretty boy-way guys can be. A striking face, almost-white platinum blond hair over a black undercut, and a beauty mark to the left just under his lips. He wore black and white- a black button-down overshirt with a white v-neck underneath which featured a stylized wolf face in dark gray. His legs were clad in dark gray jeans and his eyes were covered by designer glasses.

"Who is that?" Alya questioned, in a state of awe similar to her best friend.

"Elias Argent! How nice to finally meet you!" squealed Chloe, instantly running up and latching onto his arm as if she'd known him forever. "I am a HUGE fan of your mother- I have so many posters-"

"Get off!" Elias snapped, wrenching his hand from the blond socialite. "This shirt is an Argent Original." He smoothed a hand over the front and dusted invisible Chloe-dust from the sleeve, and Mari giggled lightly.

His gaze snapped to her instantly, as did Chloe's glare. He sauntered over, stride confident and practiced with ease. He was like Chat Noir, only without the flirting.

"You areâ€¦| Marinette Dupain-Cheng." he stated. At her confused look, he smirked. "I read about you in the article on Jagged Stone's album cover. And the Gabriel Agreste bowler hat competition. You are an up-and-coming designer, no?"

"Yeahâ€¦| I mean, yes." Mari replied. Where was he going with this?

He held out his hand. "Elias Argent, aspiring fashion designer as well." She took his hand to shake it, and was surprised when he flipped their intertwined hands over to kiss the back of hers. "I look forward to rivalling you, Marinette."

With that, he sauntered off, up the steps of the school and into the building, leaving a dumfounded Mari and raging Chloe in his wake.

Alya finally managed to snap the girl out of it. "Girl, looks like you have a rival!"

2. Chapter 2

Chapter 2: Intense Texture

Marinette could not wait for class to end. The day had need nothing if not taxing on her psyche. First, Mme. Bustier had seated Elias right behind Mari, as Ivan was absent that day with a cold. That meant Mari was under constant scrutiny from her so called rival, and glaring venom from a jealous Chloe. And to add salt to the wound, Adrien had yet to show up for class, so there was no distracting herself from the intensity from both sides.

When Mme. Bustier released them, Mari was quick to shove her things in her backpack and dash from the classroom with Alya and Nino hot on her heels.

"Marinette, girl, wait up!" Alya called after her.

She only stopped once she reached her locker, and even then she was looking around for Elias. Both her friends flanked her on each side.

Alya frowned at her. "What is up with the track star routine?" her best friend demanded.

"Did he follow you?" Mari asked instead.

"No, Mme. Bustier stopped him after you barrelled out of the start like Usain Bolt at the Olympics. She wanted to ask him about future seating arrangements, seeing as that is Ivan's seat." Alya

replied.

"Good," sighed Mari, closing her locker contentedly.

"What's got you spooked about him?" Nino asked. "He seems okay, if a little intense."

Mari sighed again. "I don't handle intensity too well, off the cuff like that. I need to get accumulated. Besides, it's unnerving having someone stare at you all the time for no good reason—" Note to self: stop staring at Adrien so intensely during class.

Nino cocked a brow. "He was staring that intensely?"

"You didn't see what Argent did this morning when he met her."

"AL-YA!" Mari hissed.

"Kissed her smack on the—"

"I SWEAR!"

"—back of the hand. Like some prince or something." Ayla finished informing her boyfriend. "I thought he broke her for a second, introduced himself as her 'rival'."

"I'm never getting you croissants from the bakery again." Mari threatened.

Alya threw her arms around her friend. "Aw, you will. How else are you gonna pay for all my help with Adrien? Did you think I did this pro bono?"

After talking some more and getting their books, Alya, Mari, and Nino made their way to the front of the steps. The trio of friends started down the steps of the school, pausing only when they spotted Chloe trying to squeeze her way into the limo from this morning. Elias' limo.

When they got to the bottom, the window rolled down slowly, and Chloe began threatening/begging Elias.

"Please let me meet your mom! I swear if you do, you can be my new best friend. If you don't, I swear I will make your life Hell." Chloe interchanged threats with pleas.

"Marinette," Elias called when they went to leave down the street. "Let me take you home. I want to talk."

Ignoring Alya suggestive stare, Mari turned to the guy. "Thanks, but I have somewhere private to go today."

He gave a noncommittal hum and said, "Okay, next time."

With that, he rolled the window back up and the limo pulled out of the curb leaving a spitting mad Chloe behind.

The blond socialite turned her spitting blue eyes at Mari and jabbed a finger in her direction. "What does he see in you? Just because you

got lucky and won some contest? You are nothing but a joke!"

"The only joke here is that jacket you're wearing, Chloe." Alya shot back.

Chloe huffed and straightened herself, turning on her heel. "Ridicule! Come on Sabrina, lets find another way to meet my idol."

The ginger girl meekly followed her best friend away, leaving the trio alone to walk home.

"Where do you have to go today? Is it that place you keep going and won't tell me about?" Alya asked.

"Yeahâ€¦" Lately, ever since the whole Volpina episode, Mari had been going to Master Fu's massage parlour for guidance and extra insight on the akuma attacks. It was always helpful, sometimes critical, but never unappreciated. And she was learning more about her Miraculous as well. But these were things she couldn't share with Alya, Nino, and least of all Adrien. For her friends to know clumsy, average Marinette Dupain-Cheng moonlighted as the incredible, miraculous Ladybug would break their hearts.

She twisted the strap on her purse. "It's just something I want to keep private."

Alya shrugged. "You do you, girl. Anyway, about the akuma attack from this morning. Are you sure you didn't catch any of it? Like not even a little?"

Mari mutely shook her head, while Nino replied, "I saw the news report."

XXX

Adrien Agreste sighed as he entered his house, the Agreste Manor. It wasn't really a "home" feeling sort of place. Just a big showroom thing devoid of warmth and color since his mother disappeared.

Nathalie, his father's assistant, met him at the apex of the stairs. "Your Chinese tutor will be late today. You have approximately forty-five minutes of free time. I suggest you study."

Adrien nodded obediently. "Is my father home?" he asked, hoping to speak with him about the book he'd lost. Perhaps he could make up some excuse, and still finagle an explanation from his father as to how he got the book.

"I'm afraid he's busy with a private matter. I'll tell him you asked to see him." Nathalie replied, before softening her expression a bit. "Perhaps for dinner, Adrien."

"Merci, Nathalie." Adrien conceded before trudging off to his room.

Once he close the door, a black furball darted from his shirt pocket. "Hmph, all day modelling and not even a slice of cheese to show for it."

Adrien frowned at his kwami. "You weren't modelling; I was."

"And I still had to be there, remember. After that morning battle with the Fleur, I have yet to get a bite to eat."

Adrien groaned. "I'll check the mini fridge."

Moments later, his partner feeding and content, Adrien found himself on his computer, staring at his Lady Luck. His love, his partner in heroism, the yin to his yang. Ladybug.

"Oh Ladybugâ€¦ If only I could see you more often than the occasional patrol and akuma attackâ€¦"

"Bleh, please Adrien, your making my Camembert taste mushy with your lovesickness."

Adrien frowned at the outburst but pushed away from the monitor. "But Plagg, what about the book? We lost it and I know my dad won't just forget about it."

"Well, we've tried retracing your steps, and asking that Lila girl about it. No dice, right? Just leave it for a while and maybe it will pop back up."

Adrien grumbled. "That's your answer for everything."

"And it works for everything too."

His phone started buzzing in his pocket. It was Nino. "Hey, Nino."

"Dude where were you today? We had a new student come in today."

"Like Lila?" Adrien still didn't know how he felt about the girl. She seemed nice enough, if not desperate for attention.

"Nah, it's a guy- son of that actress, Eileen Argent. I think his name was Eli Argent. He was pretty intense, dude. He spooked the ponytails off of Marinette though, all intensity and crap." Nino reported.

Adrien frowned. "He scared her?" Marinette was one of his first friends at school, so he was a bit protective of the shy designer. He liked to think they were close enough, even if she did act funny around him.

"Not really, just kind of unnerved her. Like he was trying to solve the mystery of her freckles and she was guarding it with her life."

The analogy was lost to the model but he agreed nonetheless with his best friend. "So, what did I miss in class?"

That opened up a half hour conversation about the events of school, filling up his free time with some laughter and antics. It wasn't until Nathalie knocked on his door to tell him his instructor was here that he said goodbye to Nino.

Plagg flickered his tail goodbye at the departing boy, engrossed in his third piece of Camembert cheese.

XXX

The next day at school, Adrien got ready to meet Eli Arget. He was a bit skeptical on who could unnerve Marinette- one of the bravest , but shyest people he knew. He was expecting someone sinister, someone ruthless and cynical.

He was not expecting Mari to be walking in with the guy (Nino pointed him out) and engrossed in a argument over textures for fabrics. "Leather is definitely the nicest texture." Mari proposed.

"Not as nice as flocking. Think about it, that texture screams comfort and homestyle." the two-tone haired boy argued.

She laughed at his description. "So does knitting."

Alya sidled up beside the male best friends, a rueful smile on her lips. "They've been like this since I don't know when. I was in front of the school when they showed up walking together like this." she explained.

"She doesn't look intimidated to me." Adrien shot to Nino.

The DJ shrugged. "She was yesterday. Just goes to show that Marinette has tamed the beast."

"What beast? That guy was gone when he laid eyes on my girl." Alya boasted.

Nino rolled his eyes, and called out. "Hey Marinette."

She broke away from her argument with Eli to greet him back, only for her eyes to wander to Adrien. Then she began a halted, stuttering greeting for him. "H-hey, Adrienâ€¦"

"Hi, Marinette."

XXX

Elias prided himself on being an observant individual. Observant and proactive. Yesterday, after reviewing his actions towards his rival, he realized he was making her feel uncomfortable- well, in all the wrong ways. So he decided to soften his approach and try another plan of action. Hence their debate on pattern textures.

She preferred leather and jacquard, while he found himself fond of flock and ribbed. They both believed, however, that chiffon was overdone and tried.

She was insightful and opinionated, but willing to hear him out. They would be great rivals, indeed.

But seeing her now, in front of this familiar blond model, Eli found himself questioning whether everything was a mirage. One look at blondie and she became shy and reserved.

He nudged her lightly and she snapped out of it. "Oh, right, y-you were absent y-yesterday, s-so you didn't meet him. A-Adrien, this is Elias Argent. Eli, this is Adrien Agreste."

Suddenly it clicked. "As in son of Gabriel Agreste? The fashion empire?"

Adrien shrugged. "That's the one. Nice to meet you." He held out a hand.

Eli shook it. "You're the face of the teen line, correct? Do you have time, because I have some questions about the fall line-"

Adrien held up hands. "My dad gives me no input in the design aspect. Everything is top secret and confidential until the unveiling this summer."

Eli felt his shoulders sag. "Oh."

Mari bumped shoulders with him. "Hey, cheer up. I have some magazines from the Madrid Martinique Fusion line of Stephan Boulier we can gawk at for lunch."

He quirked a brow. "Are you inviting me for lunch?"

"Just bangaing your wounded designing spirit. Can't have my rival defeated so easily."

He smirked. "As if that will get me down. You're not getting off that easily, mon chere."

"I hope not. I need a challenge."

XXX

AK: This is just me joining the rest of my Miraculous Trash brethren with a fanfiction. DISCLAIMER: I am not a fashion/fabric expert. This is just me googling stuff. I'm sorry if I got some things wrong. I will try to be more accurate later. You can also find out more about this story via my blog: blog/kawaiiichocol896 . Going to try and make this a regular thing. Don't worry, still working on other stories too.

3. Chapter 3

Adrien was a very happy kitty. Lunch hour was spent at the Dupain-Cheng Bakery for a change, after much wheedling and pestering of Nathalie, who promised calorie-burning workouts and supplements in return for the "cheat day he proquired. Translation: Tofu for dinner and an extra hour added to his fencing practice on Friday.

He didn't mind though as he ate another warm and toasty croissant. "Mmm, I love your parents' bakery Marinette." he said over a mouthful of buttery deliciousness.

"Glad to hear it, son." her father, Tom, called from the back.

Mari just blushed at the compliment, before Eli caught her attention about the Boulier design on the page. Both young designers had their

heads together murmuring about the bold colors of the Martinique line. Alya, who boasted Martinique heritage, was also at their table, calling out inaccuracies in the design but mostly just "chaperoning", according to Nino. Why, Adrien did not know, but the blogger cared deeply about her friend apparently.

Adrien decided to go easy on the pastries in the end, but bought a couple for Nathalie and the Gorilla (he tried to be nicer to his bodyguard/driver since he sent him down an elevator shaft that one time). He also splurged on a cheese filled pastry for Plagg later.

Nino looked at him funny for buying three more cheese-filled puffs, but he covered it by claiming it was a snack for after his next modeling shoot after school that day.

On their way back to school, Mari was talking with Alya, leaving Eli free. He stared straight ahead, not trying to engage Nino or Adrien in conversation.

Adrien tried to break the ice. "So, Eli?" he began, "What do you do for fun?"

"Sketch, read, watch cooking shows." Eli replied shortly.

"That's cool." He tried again. "Play any sports?"

"I fenced a little in my old school. But I gave that up to put more time towards sketching."

Adrien was sensing a pattern here. "Do you want to sit in on our fencing class, today?"

"Not really." Eli said.

The girls were farther away, now, animated about something enough that their pace kicked forward. He thought about something else to say. "What do you like to read?" Nino looked over at him funny, eyebrow raised.

"Fiction, fan fiction, sci-fi, science fiction, adventure, drama." More listing.

"Any stories you recommend? Something you like? Fan fiction-wise?" Adrien asked.

Eli looked at him from the side of his unusual blue eyes. The always seemed focused and mercurial between light blue and deep blue, like an ever changing ombre. "For you? Harry Potter's 'My Immortal'."

At that Adrien stopped. 'My Immortal'? What did he ever do to this guy?

"Um?"

Eli chuckled. "I'm just kidding, Agreste. Don't take it so personally. I'm not one for me-centric conversation, is all."

Adrien sighed, relieved. He didn't hate him. That was good; it would be kind of awkward if he hated him off the cuff like that. "Okay."

Then let's talk about something else."

"Like what?" Eli asked.

"What do you think of Paris, so far?" Adrien asked.

Eli was silent for a moment. "It's okay, I guess, just kind of dull for the most part."

"Dull?"

"I need an edge to inspire me. I like designing with an edge in mind, you know? A kick. Something out there!" He seemed animated about it, pushing back his platinum locks from his face.

"Well--"

"AAAIIEEE!" a scream of fear rent the air, making Adrien turn to Eli in shock. Both guys sprint towards the sound, with Nino leading the way calling, "Alya! Babe? Alya?!"

It was an akuma attack, of course. And Alya was already live streaming commentary.

"This is your Ladyblogger extraordinaire, Alya Cesaire, live at the scene of the most recent outbreak of an akuma attack!"

"Akuma attack?" parroted Eli.

"It's this supervillain we have, Hawkmoth, he preys on people's dark emotions and twists them into powerful villains bent on destroying whatever made them feel negatively."

And this one was attacking the school. Great, Hawk moth, Adrien thought attacks like this, my dad will lock me in the house and never let me out until I'm thirty.

The akuma in question was a small looking girl in a dark teal long sleeve unitard with a black gossamer tutu skirt and fishnet nylons with dark teal ballet shoes laced up her legs. Her face was completely covered with a white make-up, making her pale as a sheet, her lips a pale teal, her cheeks blush pink, and her hair was a dark teal, pulled back in a severe bun.

"I am BELLERINA! Queen of the Dance, master of the art of forme! You made a mockery of me, relegating me to the chorus. I will be the star! And you will feel my wrath!"

She slowly began to spin, gaining speed as she aimed herself at the doors of the school. The dent she left in the school, steps belied her tiny size. The akuma was a spinning force of destruction

"Didn't the ballet parts get assigned today for the big showcase?" Mari asked Alya.

"Uh-huh, Mme. Sofie announced them before the lunch break. I guess someone didn't get the part they were hoping for."

Adrien slowly began to make his departure from the group, patting his pocket to make sure Plagg was alerted to the problem.

"I think it's time the Dancer learned a more contemporary style." Adrien murmured, ducking into a private (and convenient, in retrospect) alley way. "Plagg, _transforme moi_!"

XXX

Marinette was trapped. Not in the conventional sense, but in the situational sense. When cement chunks started flying, Eli had grabbed her hand and tugged her away from the area. Now, he was holding her hand intently, looking up at the scene with a mixture of excitement and trepidation.

"Eli, come on, we have to go back out there!" _So I can conveniently slip away and _change, she silently added.

"This is way too dangerous."

"But Alya's still out there with Nino!" Mari pointed out "Let me go get her!"

"No, that's way too dangerousâ€¦" Eli denied.

Mari grumbled, until he said, "I'll go, you stay here."

Before she could protest, he was gone back into the fray. Mari released Tikki from her purse. "Oh no, he's going out there unprepared!" she lamented to her kwami.

"Then let's get Ladybug to steer him back into safety." her fairy-like partner suggested.

"Right. Tikki, _transforme moi_!"

In seconds, Mari was replaced by Ladybug and the heroine was on the move the moment the transformation set in.

XXX

Chat Noir did not do ballet. The occasional moonwalk, the running man, Gangnam-style, even some fancy shuffle, but a _fouette_? Now way did this cat _fouette_!

Somehow, he found himself backing away from the Bellarina as she did just that in his direction, tearing up the street like her dainty feet were drill bits.

Suddenly, his Lady's yoyo shot from the side and wrapped securely around his waist, pulling him from her destructive path. "Can I cut in, _mon chaton_?"

"By all means, my Lady. You know my dance card belongs to you." He grinned at his red-and-black partner's timely intervention. Her good luck had struck again.

She rolled her eyes at him. "Let me handle this primadonna. You clear the civilians, okay?"

He took off towards the groups of onlookers, which were mainly gathering around Alya and her blog feed. "Alya!" he yelled. "You've

got to get out of here."

The ombre-haired blogger scoffed. "Yeah right, I might have missed yesterday's attack, but there is no way I'll give this up!"

He groaned. "Look Lois Lane, Ladybug and I cannot fight her and protect you at the same time." He looked to Nino, pleadingly.

Nino tried to persuade his girlfriend. "Think about it Alya, that last attack almost hit you and Mari. If it hadn't been for Eli and me, you two would be pancakes."

It almost hit Mari? Chat frowned. He didn't like the idea of his Princess in danger.

Alya pouted. "But it's safer now. She's not attacking the school building." Both boys stared at Alya drolly. "Fine, if it gets too dangerous, I'll go stay with Mari and Eli. But only if it gets that dangerous."

Chat didn't want a compromise, he wanted his friends safe. But before he could argue more, he heard a sharp, "Chat, a little help?"

He turned back to see Ladybug barely deflecting the sharp turns of Bellarina's _fourettes_. Man, was ballet dangerous! "I'm on my way, m'Lady!"

XXX

Eli skidded to a stop next to Alya and Nino. "We've got move!"

Alya barely glanced up. "I know, I need to get closer to the action. Better quality."

"Alyaâ€|" Nino warned.

"Kidding; I know, I promised Chat."

Eli groaned. "I mean, we gotta get out of here! It's dangerous."

Alya scoffed. "What danger? Chloe's thrown more dangerous tantrums than most akumas. Heck, Chloe was an akuma!"

What was up with Paris? Eli wondered. "It's not safe."

"Neither is being in the same class as Chloe, yet my mother insists I stay." Nino chuckled at that joke. "Look, this happens all the time. An akuma attacks, Ladybug and Chat Noir show up to save the day, Ladybug fixes everything and then the akuma is cured."

He looked to Nino who shrugged. "It's pretty repetitiveâ€|"

"Just watch, new kid. Ladybug and Chat Noir are going to school that dancing fiend."

XXX

Lucky Charm gave her a ribbon wand. The polka-dotted red ribbon taunted her with its seeming uselessness to the situation. She

studied it, then the Bellarina and came to a conclusion. Chat had already used his Cataclysm to throw the akuma off balance and save some of Paris' pavement from her crater making grande jetes..

"Chat, grab the end and follow me!" She charged head first at the ballet-themed akuma, ribbon stretched between herself and Chat.

The spinning diva didn't register she was caught until the ribbon pulled taut around her small waist. "Cross over!" The two exchanged places and ran around her, ducking under and around each other until Bellarina was tied up and struggling to move. She tried to pirouette but fell on her butt, grunting.

"Guess your a little tied up right now, huh, Bellarina?" Smirked Chat.

Ladybug groaned and the akuma frowned at him. "Really Chat..."

Ladybug removed the Bellarina's shoes and ripped them, releasing the black butterfly. "You've been a very bad butterfly, _petite akuma_."

With flourish, she captured the akuma in her yoyo and smiled down at the face as she released the pure white butterfly, purified of evil. "Bye-bye, _petit papillon_."

The akuma transformed, revealing a student dressed in a leotard and tights with a puffy teal skirt. "Bien joue." Ladybug smiled at her partner, who met her fist in their traditional fist bump. Both of their Miraculouses chose that moment to go off. "We better split before the curtain closes, m'Lady." Chat purred. "Although, seeing who you really are wouldn't change a thing in my eyes."

"Oh really, kitty?" Ladybug swung her yoyo in an overhead arch, raising a brow at her partner.

"Of course not. I only have one primadonna in my life, and that is you, my Red Lady."

Smirking at his pick up line, she swung away, tossing behind her. "Until next time, _mon chaton_!"

XXX

AK: Ack! I spent all my time on this chapter and none of my other stories. Curse you Miraculous Fan-girling! Also, the akuma's name is Bellarina, a play on Bella and Ballerina. I know, lame. But her explanation gets lamer in the next chapter. Still, R & R as always.

3

4. Chapter 4

It took about two more akuma attacks before Eli came to accept that Paris had a supernatural problem. Well, Mari amended, two more akuma attacks, a parade thrown in honor of Ladybug and Chat Noir, and a tour of the many ladybug themed kiosks around the Eiffel Tower. He, Nino and Adrien bought Chat Noir pun t-shirts, much to Alya and Mari's chagrin.

Actually, that was what Eli was wearing to school right now. He waved to the quartet of friends waiting at the steps as he stepped out of the limo. "Hey, check it out, bro!" Nino grinned, gesturing to himself and Adrien. "We match!"

Mari's heart and mind warred. Her heart hissed, See we could have totally couple-matched with Adrien and been well on our way to the Plan. Her mind insisted, We will compromise the Plan to avoid pandering to Chat's bad puns. The Plan consisted of, in Alya's opinion, a delusional series of unrelated events to which Mari fantasised. Heavily. To Mari, it was the three step program to how she and Adrien would end up married with Hugo, Emma and Louis.

Adrien, Eli and Nino all bumped fists and grinned at their matching pun shirts that proclaimed them to be "Paw-sitively Claw-some" with a winking Chat head framed between the two "words".

"We better get into class, or Mme. Bustier will have a fit." Alya motioned, hooking Nino's arm with hers.

"Sure, babe. Hey, should we get matching pun shirts too? Ladybug themed, of course."

Mari didn't have to see Alya's face to know the reaction. "Aw, that's cute. But no."

Mari giggled as she trailed behind her lovey-dovey friends on the way to class. She was smiling up until Chloe suddenly rocketed from nowhere and shoved her out of the way to glom onto both Eli and Adrien.

"Adri-kins! Eli-poo!"

"Eli-poo?!" Eli guffawed, glaring down at the bright yellow clad blond on his arm.

"We have to hang out after school today, Adri-kins. To show Eli-poo the finer side of Paris." Chloe bubbled in all her yellow glory.

A hand extended before Mari, and she saw it belonged to Nathaneal. "Merci, Nathanael." She accepted his hand up.

The red-headed artist blushed. "Don't worry about it." He shuffled off to class, leaving Mari pondering.

She really hadn't talked to Nathanael one-on-one since the whole "Evilustrator" thing. She got that he was morbidly embarrassed about the way he'd acted, but Mari didn't think anyone besides Chloe really held it against him.

"...Like I said, hands off!" Eli's voice grouched, drawing Mari's attention back to the matter at hand.

"Chloe, please, don't be that way." cajoled Adrien at the entitled brat.

Chloe pouted. "But you always hang out with Nina and Alyn, and Mari-clod."

"It's Nin-o, Alya, and Marinette." Eli corrected.

"Besides, they're my friends, why wouldn't I hang out with them?" Adrien spared a glance at Mari and smiled.

Mari's heart took off to the stratosphere. He called her his friendâ€¦|.

"But I'm your childhood friend!" whined the blonde, sending Mari's heart back to earth.

After a moment of intense whining, Adrien solemnly nodded. "Okay, I'll come over tomorrow. I don't have practice or anything. Eli?"

"Oh no-"

"Please, Adri-kins. I just want to be friends with Eli-poo. Ever since he came I've been trying my hardest-"

By threat-begging, Mari silently added, entering the classroom and effectively taking herself away from the sordid display of whining. Finally, when the two boys (and one brat) entered the room, Eli looked smug, Adrien looked tense, and Chloe stomped over to Mari and Alya's desk. Mari looked puzzled. Alya looked ready to do verbal battle.

"You three are coming to my house tomorrow. Wear something presentable and don't do anything weird. My dad's the mayor and if I say so, he'll have you deported." With that, Chloe went back to her seat next to Sabrina.

Alya and Mari shared a look with class began. "What just happened?"

XXX

"You made her what?" Alya screeched at Eli, making everyone in the vicinity turn their way. Mari was just as dumbstruck as her best friend. The small quartet of friends were in the school yard, on the steps. Adrien had a modeling gig for the rest of the day, making him conveniently absent from the unveiling of the news.

It was gym time and the coach was currently leading the boys fencing team in a demonstration. "Parre, Baptiste, parre!" he bellowed.

"I made her invite my friends along. You didn't think I would actually go into the Lair of the Blonde without backup did you?" Eli smirked.

"YES! Be a man!" Alya went to sock him in the arm.

"Ouch! Nino, your girlfriend's dangerous."

Nino smiled dreamily. "I knowâ€¦|" When Mari and Eli gave him a weird look, he coughed. "But seriously dude, Chloe's house? The last time I was there was for a forced birthday party, 'honoring' Chloe."

Marinette remembered that party two years ago. "I remember that. She made us all play this game called 'Who's the Most Important?' The answer was always Chloe."

Eli shrugged. "What? You want me to go by myself?" he leaned into Mari, pouting like a puppy. "You know you'd never let me suffer you, Mari-pie?"

Mari frowned and pushed lightly at his forehead. "No way."

"But Mariâ€|Alya?"

The Martinique blogger shook her head. "No way. You're on your own."

Eli sighed. "Then I guess Adrien's on his own, too. I only agreed to go if you guys come. So now Adrien will be alone at Chloe's houseâ€|"

Mari twitched. "Adrien's definitely going?"

Eli hummed noncommittally. "Maybeâ€|"

Alya rested a hand on the jittery girl's shoulder. "No. We're not going."

Nino groaned. "I can't leave my bros hanging. I'll go."

"Merci, Nino." The two bumped fists.

Mari frowned and looked to Alya. Her best friend shook her head. "We are totally not going. Just to have Chloe tear you down? No way."

XXX

"Please, Mari. Please, please, please?"

Mari was currently working on a new skirt design inspired by the Mermaid themed akuma of last week. An incensed performer at a traveling troupe had been akuma-tized into Aquatica, and terrorized Paris with killer clams and a surprisingly agile Dogfish.

The long shimmering fabric she was molding into a high-low skirt was breath-taking. So much so that for three days, Mari had labored over how to approach the design and whether it was worth cutting into the cerulean-sea-foam toned cloth.

"No, Eli." Mari stressed. "I am totally not going to Chloe's house with you guys."

"Come on. Please?" Eli whined over the phone. "I'll do whatever you want. Please? You know you want to show her up at her house."

"Yeah, but I'm a clutz, and she knows me, so it's highly unlikely that she would be shown up. " Mari paused in her hemming. "Why do you hate her anyway?"

Eli sighed deeply over the line. "She followed me to my mom's location shoot for a movie promo. You know that fall weather romance

coming out next year? La Septembre du Coeur? She set the shoot back for a few days with her annoying attitude, "

Mari gasped. "She didn't!"

"She did. And that means my mom's away for longerâ€¦ So please?"

Mari contemplated it, "You'll do anything?" It would be nice to have a favor in the future.

"Anything within my power, Mari-pie. You say jump, I'll ask how high."

"Fine, I'll go." Mari sighed.

"One more thing."

Mari frowned. "I'm listeningâ€¦"

"See if you can convince Alya too. I'd hate for my boy Nino to go without his girl."

Mari sighed. "Okayâ€¦"

"You won't regret this, Mari! Thank you,"

The call ended there and Mari stared at her phone. "I hope not."

XXX

Chat found his lady oddly distracted during patrol today. The night was quiet and he'd managed to steer their patrol route to a nearby garden alive with the colors of spring. "Is something on your mind, M'Lady?"

She smiled at him, contently. "I'm fine, mon minou." His dream girl sighed again a few moments later.

He stepped in front of her and rested both hands on her shoulders. "My Lady, you know you can tell me everything and anything. And since you insist on anonymity with our relationship, you know it won't come back to haunt you."

His lady looked ready to brush him off but he pressed, "Please, talk to me."

"I...let a friend of mine pressure me into doing something I think I'll regret later."

Chat frowned. "Is it something bad? Do you need help?"

She laughed. "Nothing so dramaticâ€¦ Justâ€¦ It puts me in an uncomfortable situation."

"More comfortable than being around me and my egg-cellent puns?"

She smirked. "Oh please, there aren't even any eggsâ€¦"

He gestured to the billboard featuring an egg-shaped jewel carrier bauble being advertised by a museum.

"Touche, mon minou." Then she looked around and noticed where they were. "Flowers, Chat? Really?"

"Well I was certain a bug of your discerning taste would appreciate a short break." He smiled. "Now talk. I think you owe me an explanation, m'Lady."

Ladybug looked exasperated by the pun but explained. "I have to be in close proximity with someone I really want to make a good impression on, and someone I know will do anything to make me fail. Not to mention, I'm fairly clumsy!"

"When you're not leaping from grand heights and cart-wheeling circles around akumas."

"Exactly." Ladybug sighed. "It's just so hard! When I'm hero-ing. It seems so easy to be brave and graceful! The mask is really cathartic"

Chat frowned. "So just channel the mask."

She frowned. "That won't work."

"Just in short bursts; have you ever tried it?" She looked pensive before sheepishly shaking her head. "Iris my case, then." He presented her with a blue violet bloom of said plant.

"Chat seriously, where do you get these puns? They are awful!" his lady laughed.

"Don't you mean!"

"Chat, no! I swear-"

"Paw-ful?"

She groaned as he laughed. He knew she liked his puns, deep inside.

"Let's finish our patrol, so I can get away from your cheesy puns." She whipped out her yoyo, a new light in her movements.

"And my advice?"

She looked at him over her shoulder. "I'll take it with a grain of salt, mon minou. Now let's go. The south side of Paris is calling."

And so Chat followed his newly revived lady into the night.

XXX

AK: I really wish more happened in this chapter but this is literally just a prequel for what is to come. Don't despair my fellow Miraculous Sinners, there will be more to come, especially LadyNoir, and MariChat. R&R, s'il vous plait!

5. Chapter 5

Chapter 5:

"Wow, Marinette you look cute today." Rose commented as the bluenette walked into class, flanked by Alya.

"Yeah, _super_ cute." Kim grinned. He gave a wolf whistle too, only to be hit on the head by Alix.

Mari blushed. "Merci, Rose, Kim." Did she really look that different today? She wondered this as she took her seat.

After getting back from patrol as Ladybug and with Chat's oddly great advice in her head, she'd planned an outfit for the big visit to Chloe's, with input from Tikki. At the moment, she wore a high-waisted thigh length soft gray skirt with a sedate pink quarter-sleeve shirt embroidered with a cursive "L'Amour". Her usual dark gray jacket was swapped for a white denim vest. Her red hair ribbons were swapped for matching pink hair ribbons. She wore her usual ballet flats adorned her feet and her usual side bag, complete with Tikki and a small cache of cookies rested at her side.

"Big plans after school today?" Juleka asked.

Mari looked to Alya who frowned at her. "Wellâ€¦"

"Well, I see you tried to look presentable," sneered Chloe from her seat. Her eyes assessed Mari's outfit in one sweep. "It's no better than what you usually wear."

Mari ignored that jab, instead taking her seat. Alya followed her. "See?" Alya hissed low under her breath. "This is why we should leave Eli and the boys to their doom with stupid Chloe."

It had taken copious amounts of pleading, begging and bribery to get Alya to agree to come with them to Chloe's. If there was a set limit on best friend favors, Mari was sure she'd have maxed out for a month.

"I can handle Chloe. I know I can. I've done it before. I just need to remember that this is about making sure Chloe doesn't mess with our guys, and Eli."

Alya smirked. "So now Adrien is your guy?"

Mari blushed even deeper. "It's a work in progressâ€¦"

"_Bonjour_, Marinette. What's a work in progress?" asked Adrien, just entering the class and taking his seat.

"Adrien! Good us- I mean, good morning, Adrienâ€¦" Mari flustered. "I was talking aboutâ€¦ this outfit! It's a work in progress. Just thought I'd test it out todayâ€¦"

Adrien smiled. "I think its cute."

"_M-merci_, Adrienâ€¦" Mari fidgeted in her seat as her best friend watched with a smirk. She dreamily watched him chat with Nino about

the events of the modeling gig from yesterday.

"You totally wore that to look good for Adrien, didn't you?" Alya whispered conspiratorially.

"No!" Mari whispered back. "Just a littleâ€¦ But I did want to test it out. I really like the way the design of this skirt came out."

"Hmmâ€¦" her best friend wasn't buying it.

The rest of the day was full of compliments on her outfit, some from upperclassmen and others from the assistant art instructor Theo Barbeau. She was bubbling with happiness and euphoria, by the time math rolled around.

Eli came late to school, but he had an excuse. He went to his seat in the back, near Nathanael. A few moments into class, Mari's phone vibrated. She looked down to see it was a text from Eli.

E: Like the outfit. The skirt would look better w/cardigan tho ;)

Mari rolled her eyes and sent a quick reply.

M: That's a date look. This is a trip to the Brat's Lair. Vest works for this.

Mme. Mendeleiev chose that moment to reprimand Chloe for texting and Mari stealthily slipped her phone back into her bag. As Chloe argued that she was simply texting her driver to be ready after school.

"This is totally ridicule! Ridicule!" Chloe pouted as Mendeleiev continued with her lesson, confiscating her phone.

XXX

Adrien glanced over, not for the first time, at Mari as she gazed at Chloe's room. It was pretty huge, fitting Mari's room in it three times over.

But I still prefer Mari's room to this mausoleum, Adrien thought to himself, remembering the warmth of the Dupain-Cheng household.

"Mademoiselle Bourgeois, your snacks are here." a maid said from the doorway.

Chloe dismissed the older woman with a flick of her hand. "Sabrina, bring the snacks over here. You are going to love this Eli-poo-" Eli and the rest of the gang winced at the nickname. "-I've got the best pastries in Paris. My chef is world-class."

Eli plucked a cream puff from the tray Sabrina wheeled in front of the quintet of friend and tossed it into his mouth without preamble. Adrien simply went with a fluffy looking croissant that was heavier than it looked. He tore off a piece and popped it in his mouth, only to find himself frowning. It tasted-

"Too sweet!" Eli exclaimed, grabbing a napkin to spit it out into.
"Gross!"

"It can't be!" Chloe gasped.

"Really?" Alya and Mari picked a danish to share, after chewing it for a moment, forcibly swallowed the bites. "It tastes like someone mixed too much sugar into this filling." Alya grimaced. Given their danish was a cream cheese and strawberry one, the result would be disgusting.

Mari had her fingers pressed to her lips and was staring at the pastry, hard. As a baker's daughter, she was probably affronted.

"Well don't trust you!" Chloe picked up a cream puff and took a bite. "Ew! This is disgusting!" Chloe marched over to the phone and called down to the kitchen. Trepidation filled Adrien. He had a bad feeling Chat Noir was going to be necessary after this.

"Chlo, don't do anything too rash!" Adrien warned. He tried using her old nickname to soften her up.

"Oh, I'm perfectly calm, Adri-kins! Perfectly! Calm!" she seethed, before turning her attention to the kitchen staff. "Send the person responsible for these pastries up here right now!" A moment passed. 'I want them in my room, yesterday!"

Adrien winced. "It could just be a simple mistake, Chloe."

"A mistake my father, the mayor, does not pay this peon for!" ranted Chloe as Sabrina tried to comfort the distraught heiress.

A few minutes later, a stoic young woman came into Chloe's room, followed by the sous chef. Alya's mother was out sick for the day. "Is this the person responsible?" Choe demanded.

The sous-chef hesitated but nodded grimly. He knew he was signing the death warrant of a young career.

The blonde attack with ferocious tenacity- something Adrien thought Chloe only had for shopping and Ladybug.

"You stupid, untalented, no-good sorry excuse for a pastry chef!" She jabbed her finger at the young woman without preamble.

"I'm sorry?" the young chef frowned.

"You are fired! FIRED! These pastries are disgusting! You made my Adri-kins and Eli-poo barf with this garbage!"

The chef shook her head. "I don't understand. I-I was told to come up here to get the tray. I never-" She looked to her boss, but he looked away. "What's going-"

"You are finished in the culinary industry. Just wait until I tell my father about this. It's like trying to poison the princess of Paris."

Paris hadn't had a princess since before the Sun King, Louis XIV,

Adrien thought, dread filling his chest. The woman looked confused and teary-eyed, never a good sign with people like Hawk Moth waiting in the wings.

"B-but I didn'tâ€¦" the woman looked ready to cry.

"Chloe, please, think rationallyâ€¦" cautioned Mari, a worried look on her face.

"Shut up! I don't want to see your worthless face in here again! You are fired!"

The woman left the room in tears. "Wait!" Mari rushed after her, probably to comfort the woman. Mari was kind that way.

"Ugh, totally _ridicule_! Well she's gone now. Get me _better_ snacks!" she said as she dismissed the remaining chef.

"That wasn't very cool, Chloe." Nino frowned.

"Yeah, i mean it was one mistake." Eli chimed in.

Chloe pouted. "My father said that mistakes like that cannot be mistakes. Everything was too sweet or heavy. I am totally not wrong in this. Totally not wrong!"

XXX

The Bourgeois brat was soo wrong! Colette Dechant thought to herself as she rushed away in tears.

The shining star of the Paris Culinary Academy, she'd been snatched up in a heartbeat by the Mayor of Paris after winning the esteemed Golden Ladle on the international cooking show World Wide Kitchen. Had the brat even let her speak she would have informed her that she hadn't even touched the pastries set to the brat's room.

She couldn't have, seeing as how she'd been getting the secret ingredient for tonight's dinner- seaweed. Tonight had been her's, to choose the entree for the hotel. She'd decided to do a Japanese inspired dish.

As she got into the elevator, she saw a girl chasing after her. One of Chloe's friends- the bluenette girl. She hastily shut the door.

Colette sobbed in the solitary confinement of her elevator, digging from the confines of her pockets a small charm bracelet. Now she would never fulfill her aunt's dream of being head chef at the Hotel du Paris. "Desole, Mama Helene..." she sobbed. She didn't notice the black butterfly that flew into her bracelet. She only lifted her head when a voice, so alluring and tempting whispered in her ears.

"_Hello __**Chef Calamity**__, I am Hawk Moth,"_

"Hawk Mothâ€¦"

"_You've been burned in your last occupation, but no longerâ€¦ This time, you will show them your mettle in the kitchen."_

"Yes, I willâ€|"

"_And all I ask for are two small ingredients for my own masterpiece: the Miraculouses of Ladybug and Chat Noir."_

"I will bring them post haste." Colette said affirmatively as her transformation took over.

XXX

Mari ran after the young chef's elevator, only to see it start to descend. She groaned and turned down the hall to the next elevator. opening her bag and releasing Tikki just in case. "Do you think the head chef got it wrong?" Tikki asked.

"I live with bakers. I know bakers. She was definitely not a baker! At least not today." Mari told Tikki.

"Then who-" Tikki suddenly ducked into Mari's pigtails as they came across the sous chef hissing into a phone.

"-not covering for you again! She got fired because of your rookie mistake." he growled. "This is the last time, Maurice!"

"Maurice?" Mari parroted stepping forward.

"Ah-umm, you're one of Chloe's friendsâ€|"

"What did you just say? Were you covering for someone in there? Don't lie to me, I heard everything." bluffed Mari.

The older man looked around for a way to escape the small teen but found himself sighing in reluctance. "Colette, the girl Mademoiselle Bourgeois fired, didn't bake anything on that tray. It was all my younger brother, Maurice. When the call came in, I panicked and he had the brilliant idea to frame Colette. I don't think he likes her muchâ€|"

Mari folded her hands in front of her. "And you didn't think it would get her fired. You're the sous-chef, you should know how high strung Chloe is."

"I do butâ€|"

"Then you've got to tell Chloe and get Colette's job back. It's not fair she gets punished for you two."

"I guessâ€|" The older man sighed. "I guess I should. I mean, this isn't the first time Maurice has slipped upâ€|" He gave a decisive nod. "I will. Let me get Colette so she can hear it too."

Mari followed. "I'll come too." She had a bad feeling this was going to require Ladybug help.

XXX

AK: Here's a two-for, because for the next two weeks, I'll have to put everything on pause for my final exams. Collegeâ€| R&R

End
file.